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Employee News

Congratulations Joe Rossetti!

- ◆ Congratulations to Joe Rossetti on becoming VDOF's new Hardwood Coordinator, starting October 25. Joe has over 16 years of service with VDOF and has served roles: in Forest Inventory and Analysis, area forester in Prince George and Surry, Fauquier/Northern Virginia, and most recently senior area forester in the Central Region's Rappahannock Work Area. Joe has been effective in these roles in guiding and motivating landowner, contractors, and other agencies to consider and practice hardwood management. Joe will be located in the Forest Management Branch in Charlottesville, but looks forward to advancing hardwood management throughout the state. Welcome Joe!

Welcome to VDOF

- ◆ The Eastern Region welcomes Scott Adams as a natural resource specialist in the Mattaponi Work area, based in Bowling Green. Prior to joining the agency, Scott has experience with Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), VDOF Forestry Inventory and Analysis (FIA) and several environmental consulting firms. Scott graduated from Ferrum College with a B.S. degree in Environmental Science. His first day was October 12.
- ◆ The Capital Work Area is pleased to welcome Dominic Chirico as our newest forest technician starting October 25. Dominic holds an A.A.S. in Science from Paul D. Camp Community College, a B.S. in

Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture from Mississippi State University, and a Masters of Forestry from North Carolina State University. He comes to VDOF with experience from the private sector and with AmeriCorps, including prescribed burning and invasive species control.

- ◆ Please welcome Lauren Sumner, the new VDOF Director of Finance. Lauren comes to VDOF with extensive experience managing state agency financial processes. She has spent the last few years with the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, where she was the business manager for several core agency programs. Prior to that, she worked at the Virginia Department of Treasury and Richard Bland College. Lauren has a degree in Accounting from the College of William and Mary and lives in Fluvanna with her husband and children.

Last Week

State Forester

- ◆ Rob Farrell, Ed Zimmer (deputy state forester), Terry Lasher (assistant state forester) and Sabina Dhungana (utilization and marketing manager) were pleased to attend the reception celebrating Virginia's Economic Developers at the Executive Mansion.

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ Trees Virginia hosted the final Waynesboro Webinar (part of the Waynesboro Workshop) on storm restoration pruning. Dr. Koeser from the University of Florida Gulf Coast Research Station led the discussion with some of his and colleagues' research on the subject.
- ◆ Molly O'Liddy (urban & community forestry [U&CF] partnership coordinator) gave a presentation to the Middle James Roundtable on the 'My Trees Count' app. Over 50 partners from across state agencies, nonprofits and other volunteer networks participated in the meeting.
- ◆ Lara Johnson (U&CF program manager) attended the virtual Virginia Resilient Coastal Forests State Committee Meeting.
- ◆ Lara Johnson attended the Fundamentals for Supervisors Training in Richmond, Virginia.

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ On October 12, Lori Chamberlin (forest health program manager) and Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist) along with Mark Sutphin (Virginia Cooperative Extension agent, Frederick County) and Connor Goolsby (area forester), hosted NC Forest Service Forest Health staff for a spotted lanternfly (SLF) field day. The group visited SLF hotspots around the Winchester area, including a neighborhood, a parking lot of a busy shopping center, and a fruit orchard. NC staff wanted to learn more about SLF biology and management, and to see the damage from this pest in action. It was an educational day for all, as active adult SLF were seen feeding and laying eggs. (picture is by an *Ailanthus* tree, a preferred species of SLF.)
- ◆ The Reforestation of Timberlands (RT) subcommittee of the Board of Forestry (BOF) met on Wednesday, October 13 at VDOF HQ to discuss the current and past year's RT accomplishments. This committee provides recommendations to the state forester for the administration of the program. Highlights of the 2021 RT Program year were: assisting 1,023 landowners in improving 44,461 acres; providing \$2,438,101.00 in project cost reimbursements; and the regional staff obligating 97% of the available incentive funding to projects. Greg Scheerer and Beth Hutchins were the BOF representatives present, along with State Forester Rob



Farrell, Director of Forest Resource Management Dean Cumbia and Forest Resource Management Program Manager Todd Groh.

State Forest

- ◆ Staff assisted with the longleaf pine cone picking at New Kent Forestry Center and assisted in the new employee training program held last week at New Kent with a tour of Big Woods State Forest.
- ◆ Staff assisted and hosted the Appalachian Area Future Farmers of America (FFA) Forestry Career Development Event on the Matthews State Forest. Six teams participated. Western Region - Mount Rogers Work Area team members assisted also.
- ◆ Staff hosted an educational program for Earth Science classes from Grayson County High School on the Matthews State Forest. The students tested water quality and sampled for macroinvertebrates in Clear Fork Creek on the Matthews State Forest.
- ◆ Shannon Lewis assisted with and helped lead the Virginia Tech Forestry & Wildlife bus tour, along with administration and logistics, and taught at four stops on Cumberland State Forest.

State-Owned Lands

- ◆ Staff met with staff from the Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services Piedmont Geriatric Hospital regarding open field shortleaf planting on the site using containerized shortleaf grown by VDOF. The planting areas are currently mowed fields, and planting will help to improve water quality and long term visual quality on the hospital campus.

Central Region

- ◆ Jordan Herring (senior area forester) attended the town of Purcellville's Hail to the Trail Arbor Day event to present the Tree City USA materials to the mayor. Afterward, Jordan worked with the mayor, town manager, and local scout groups to plant four trees, and later led a workshop on tree pruning. Hail to the Trail is hosted by the Town of Purcellville's Tree and Environmental Sustainability Committee and focuses on hands-on environmental activities for adults and children.
- ◆ Neal Oberholtzer and Amy Bigger (area foresters) presented a fire prevention-Smokey Bear program to approximately 25 students at Centenary Pre-school. The students learned the true story of Smokey and fire prevention tips.

Eastern Region

- ◆ The new employee orientation tour returned to the Eastern Region for the first time since 2019. Thirty-nine new or newer employees attended, with representatives from each region and headquarters. Attendees heard and saw a variety of VDOF and partnership operations across the region, including historical sites, longleaf restoration efforts, nursery and tree improvement operations, and urban & community forestry. Special thanks to Scott Bachman (senior area forester), who led the regional planning and implementation effort along with Lisa Burke (program support technician), Eli Podyma (community forester), Heather Dowling and



Jeremey Falkenau (senior area foresters) and Heather Tuck (fire specialist). Thanks also to Clint Phegley (area forester), Dean Cumbia (director of forest management), Dennis Gaston (state forest forester), Jerre Creighton (research program manager), and Josh Bennicoff (nursery manager) for presenting to the group. (pictured)

- Joe Lehnen (urban wood utilization forester) coordinator of the VA Urban Wood Program, had the pleasure of providing urban wood training for the new employees group at Brian Park in Richmond. Sean Hawkins of Derpy Dragon Studios in Richmond, also provided part of the training program and displayed some of his amazing urban wood creations. One of the questions the new employees had was where to find information on Virginia's urban wood businesses. Here are some useful links:

Urban Wood Program Info > www.vaurbanwood.org

Urban Wood Business Directory > www.vaurbanwoodhelp.org

- ◆ Lisa Deaton (area forester) led the Forestry Ecology and Dendrology Class via Zoom for the newest cohort of the Northern Neck Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists. Twenty students were in attendance. Rich Reuse provided an excellent dendrology PowerPoint presentation.
- ◆ John Rose (forest technician), Stephen Jasenak and Evan Richardson (area foresters) participated in the Suffolk Peanut Fest. On Friday morning the Suffolk schools brought students to the festival grounds. During this youth day, Smokey got to meet many



students and the festival pageant winners (pictured left). For the rest of the weekend, event festival-goers got to see a tractor transport unit on static display. (pictured above is Smokey with the Dominion Energy safety bear, unknown name)

- ◆ Alanna Ostrowski (forest technician/forest health liaison) represented VDOF during the Henrico Extension Bug Bizarre. During the event Alanna showed off forest pest specimens and provided information about emerald ash borer (EAB), spotted lanternfly, thousand cankers disease, hemlock woolly adelgid, beech leaf disease, and laurel wilt. Alanna spoke with about half of the 400 attendees. Most of the interactions and conversations covered EAB, thousand cankers, and spotted lanternfly.
- ◆ Jeremey Falkenau completed the Institute for Leadership in Changing Times (ILCT) leadership development course offered through the Virginia Police Chiefs Association. The ILCT course is aimed at individuals who are in intermediate/mid-level management positions and is being considered as a standard course for our Deputy Regional Foresters and Senior Area Forester (SAF) Liaison. Jeremey was the first VDOF attendee for this course, piloting for the agency as the SAF Liaison. The ILCT course was split into three phases: one week in class learning about leadership styles and tools; an on-the-job project; and several days back in class including a presentation and mock promotion interview. Jeremey's project focused on finding misalignments and gaps between collegiate natural resource

based programs, demographics of graduates, and VDOF entry level positions. Jeremy was able to construct a database of relevant natural resource programs within the Commonwealth for use by our HR and talent acquisition team to better focus our recruitment efforts.

- ◆ Joe Lehn (urban wood utilization forester) and the Urban Wood Utilization office, along with Meghan Mulroy-Goldman, Kendall Topping (community foresters) and Scott Bachman (senior area forester) hosted an urban wood utilization workshop, facilitated by Ed Sontag of the Norfolk Woodcraft shop. Joe arranged for a sawyer, Paul Garrity, to process a red oak log supplied by Steven T aylor (Norfolk City Arborist). The crowd of around 20 participants also listened to Ryan of RST Timberworks discuss his urban wood utilization. RST is a veteran-owned business that can take a salvaged log from a client's yard to a finished piece of furniture in a house. (Pictured right, Paul is sawing, pictured left, Ryan is speaking to the group.)



Western Region

- ◆ Bill Miller (senior area forester) assisted the Daniel Boone Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) with their annual Kids in the Creek event. The event was cancelled for the first time in almost 20 years in 2020 due to COVID-19. Some of the stations the sixth graders visited were soils, aquatics, litter control, and of course, forestry. Bill introduced the kids to a dichotomous key to identify common trees in Southwest Virginia. Approximately 160 kids attended the two day event.
- ◆ Andrew Vinson (water quality specialist) gave guest lectures to the Forested Wetlands and Forest Harvesting courses at Virginia Tech Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation. Andrew spoke on the topics of best management practices for protecting water quality, the services that VDOF provides to the forest industry for protecting water quality, as well as careers in water quality at VDOF. This was followed by a field lab for the Forest Harvesting course in which Chad Austin (water quality engineer) and Andrew led a discussion on the laws affecting timber harvesting in the State of Virginia, and the students examined a recently completed harvest to assess Best Management Practice (BMP) compliance.
- ◆ Western Region personnel met face-to-face for the first time in nearly two years as 48 personnel and presenters met in the great outdoors at VT's Catawba Sustainability Center (CSC) in Roanoke County. Small groups rotated among four stations (Forest Management, Forest Protection, Water Quality, and CSC projects) throughout the day. Boxed lunches from Heritage Family Market were provided, with homemade fried pies being the hit of the meal. Retirees Stuart Sours and Debbie Zimniewicz were in attendance and recognized for 35+ years of VDOF service and winning the 2019 Robert E. Browning, Jr. Fire Prevention Award, respectively. Despite a persistent drizzle throughout most of the day, it was good to be back together as a regional family with several new faces joining our ranks. Thank you to all the presenters for sharing their enthusiasm and expertise and to Lara Wilson (program support technician) for coordinating our lunch menu.

Public Information

- ◆ Ellen Powell (conservation education coordinator) led part 2 of tree identification for new Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards trainees.
- ◆ Ellen Powell and Cindy Frenzel (project learning tree [PLT] coordinator) represented VDOF at a meeting of the Virginia Resource Use Education Council (VRUEC).
- ◆ Ellen Powell worked with Jen Gagnon (Virginia Tech's forest landowner education program) and Jason Fisher (extension forester), to host the third of this year's 2-day educational retreats for forest landowners. Eighteen landowners attended the retreat at Holiday Lake 4-H Center. Ellen, Tom Snoddy (area forester), and Mike Womack (forest management specialist) led sessions.

News Clips

- ◆ [Governor appoints Chatham man to forestry board](#)
- ◆ [Roseburg purchases 30,000 acres](#) the timberland properties are located in the northeast region of North Carolina and the southeast region of Virginia.
- ◆ [Novel Forestry Outreach Shows Success](#)